Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/241 of 24 December 2001, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The audit, which was conducted from February to April 2002, took place at a time when the Office of Human Resources Management was preparing the groundwork for implementing the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/55/253). These proposals are being implemented with effect from 1 May 2002, as outlined in ST/AI/2002/4.

The audit focused on appointments of professional staff for one year or longer against vacancies in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that were made after obtaining the advice of the appointment and promotion bodies during 2001. Most of these vacancies had arisen as a result of new posts authorized on an emergency basis by General Assembly resolution 55/238, of 23 December 2000, in order to implement the recommendations made by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809).

The Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform envisaged the shortening of the recruitment time frame by filling vacancies within a maximum period of 120 days. The OIOS review indicated that the average recruitment time frame for filling regular vacancies in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was 362 days. The recruitment time frame for filling new vacancies that were authorized on an emergency basis by General Assembly resolution 55/238 was 264 days. These time frames are more than double the goal of 120 days. In the opinion of OIOS, the Office of Human Resources Management needs to take a proactive role in ensuring that vacancies are filled in a timely manner. The new staff selection system being implemented with effect from 1 May 2002 (the "Galaxy system") should enable the Office to closely monitor the recruitment process at each stage so that delays in candidate evaluation and departmental review are tracked and promptly followed up with the concerned departments.

The audit indicated that the Office of Human Resources Management had not fully implemented the OIOS recommendation concerning the use of numeric scoring methods for evaluating candidates, made in its report on the follow-up audit of the recruitment process (A/55/397). Although the Secretary-General's report envisages the establishment of such evaluation criteria, there was no evidence of their use in recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during 2001. OIOS noted that the "Galaxy system" provides for the use of numeric ratings for evaluating candidates.

OIOS noted several inconsistencies in the competencies and skills specified in the vacancy announcements issued by the Office of Human Resources Management. These inconsistencies were caused by wide variations in the job descriptions for similar posts, or posts at the same level, in the Department. Furthermore, although the vacancy announcements specified the minimum number of years of experience

required for each post, the Office of Human Resources Management subsequently advised the Department of Peacekeeping Operations not to use the minimum number of years of experience as a criterion for evaluation of candidates. In the opinion of OIOS, the integrity of the candidate evaluation process should be maintained by adhering to the eligibility requirements specified in vacancy announcements.

With regard to geographical distribution and gender balance, the OIOS review indicated that the nationalities and gender of staff recruited by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations against the new posts authorized by General Assembly resolution 55/238 were generally equitable and balanced. Further improvement could be achieved while recruiting candidates for the additional posts approved by General Assembly resolution 56/241.

OIOS made a number of recommendations, including:

- The Office of Human Resources Management should effectively monitor the recruitment process for each vacancy to ensure that the recruitment time frames envisaged in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform are achieved;
- The Office of Human Resources Management should ensure that the criteria for evaluating applications are established prior to issuance of the vacancy announcement. To increase the objectivity of the candidate evaluation process, the Office should encourage programme managers to make use of numeric ratings established prior to issuance of vacancy announcements, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform;
- In order to eliminate inconsistencies and disparities in the eligibility requirements for posts at the same level, the Office of Human Resources Management should prepare generic job profiles and ensure that vacancy announcements are consistent with such profiles;
- The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should review the current composition of its staff in terms of geographical distribution and take appropriate steps with a view to further improving the situation during the next phase of recruitment for the additional posts approved by the General Assembly in February 2002.

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/241, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The audit, which was conducted from February to April 2002, took place at a time when the Office of Human Resources Management was preparing the groundwork for implementing the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform.[1] These proposals are being implemented with effect from 1 May 2002 as outlined in ST/AI/2002/4.

2. The main objectives of the audit were to determine whether existing practices: (a) ensure the effective and efficient management of recruitment; (b) promote transparency in the selection process; and (c) facilitate the recruitment of the best available candidates with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and gender balance. The audit focused on the policies and procedures for recruiting professional staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during 2001. Most of these vacancies resulted from the new posts authorized on an emergency basis by General Assembly resolution 55/238 in order to implement the recommendations made by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.[2]

3. The audit reviewed the recruitment process and conducted walkthroughs by using the pilot module of the web-based "Galaxy system" developed by the Office of Human Resources Management. In addition, OIOS reviewed relevant documentation and interviewed responsible officials of the Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. A draft of the report was made available to the Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for review. Their comments are identified in the present report by the use of italics.

II. The recruitment process

A. Overall recruitment time frames

4. Previous OIOS audits had determined that, for the Secretariat as a whole, the average time frame for the recruitment process — commencing with the Department's request for issuance of a vacancy announcement and concluding with the recommended candidates' approval by the Secretary-General — was 388 days in 1996 and 275 days in 1999. These time frames for effecting regular appointments of one year or longer to professional posts in the Secretariat were considered to be much too long by both the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. The Secretary-General's report of 1 August 2000 on human resources management reform (A/55/253) envisaged the introduction of a recruitment system whereby posts would be filled within a maximum period of 120 days.

5. The current OIOS review of the recruitment of professional staff for posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during 2001 did not show any improvement since the previous OIOS audit conducted in 1999, which covered the entire Secretariat. The average time frame for recruiting candidates against 67 of the 72 new professional posts authorized for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on an emergency basis, in order to implement the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, was 264 days. Although the Department had informed the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[3] in March 2001 when the recruitment for these posts was only beginning that the recruitment time frame would be reduced to 190 days, this goal was not achieved. OIOS also found that the average number of days for recruiting professional staff for other regular posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was significantly higher, at 362 days (see table 1 below).[4] *According to the Department, the longer time frame for filling regular vacancies was attributable to the higher priority accorded by programme managers to recruiting staff for the posts authorized on an emergency basis by General Assembly resolution 55/238. The Department also stated that a vast majority of vacancies were filled on a temporary basis pending the completion of the normal recruitment process.*

Table 1
Time frames for recruiting candidates for professional posts

Process steps		*Processing time (average number of days)*		
From	*To*	*1999*	*2001 (For posts approved on emergency basis)*	*2001 (For regular posts)*
Department request for vacancy announcement	Vacancy announcement issuance	17	20	34
Vacancy announcement issuance	Vacancy announcement deadline	36	73	55
Vacancy announcement deadline	Shortlist sent to Department	21	53	34
Shortlist sent to Department	Department recommendation	152	72	185
Department recommendation	Secretary-General's approval	49	46	54
Entire process		**275**	**264**	**362**

B. Issuance of vacancy announcements

6. The audit found that the Office of Human Resources Management took an average of 20 days to issue vacancy announcements for posts authorized by the General Assembly on an emergency basis to implement the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. However, the average number of days to issue vacancy announcements relating to regular support account posts was significantly higher, at 34 days, which represented a 100 per cent increase over the average for 1999. *The Office of Human Resources Management attributed this to the high priority accorded to the urgent issuance of vacancy announcements pertaining to the additional 93 posts that were approved by the General Assembly on an emergency basis.* In the opinion of OIOS, the lead-time of 34 days for issuing vacancy announcements is unacceptably high and could be reduced considerably with the implementation of the new staff selection system introduced by the Secretary-General, effective 1 May 2002.

7. The average of 73 days needed for circulation of vacancy announcements pertaining to the posts authorized on an emergency basis by the General Assembly was significantly higher than the average of 36 days reported in the previous OIOS report of 1999 (A/55/397), mainly because all vacancy announcements pertaining to these "emergency" posts were circulated both internally and externally. The circulation period was 60 days for civilian posts and 90 days for military and civilian police posts. In 1999, not all vacancy announcements were circulated externally. Normal recruitment procedures[9] require that vacancy announcements for vacant posts at the P-3 level may be circulated externally only when there is no suitably qualified internal candidate, while vacant posts at the P-4 level shall normally be circulated internally first, taking into account the potential availability of qualified internal candidates and the need to improve geographical and gender balance. OIOS noted, however, that all posts at and above the P-3 level in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that were authorized on an emergency basis had been circulated internally and externally, simultaneously. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations explained that the decision to circulate these vacancy announcements internally and externally at the same time was made with a view to reducing the overall lead-time for their circulation. Otherwise, vacancy announcements for posts at the P-3 and P-4 levels would first have to be circulated internally; applications received from internal candidates would have to be reviewed; and in the event that no suitable internal candidate is identified, the vacancy announcement would then have to be circulated externally. Such delays were prevented by simultaneous circulation of vacancy announcements internally and externally.* The lower average of 55 days for circulating the vacancy announcements pertaining to regular posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was achieved because some announcements were only circulated internally, with a much shorter circulation period of up to 30 days.

C. Screening of applications

8. Normally, applications received in response to vacancy announcements are initially screened by the Office of Human Resources Management's reviewing

officers. Shortlists of candidates meeting all or most of the requirements of the posts are transmitted to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for further evaluation and submission to the appointment and promotion bodies. However, with regard to the posts authorized by the General Assembly on an emergency basis, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations agreed upon a new procedure for reviewing candidates' applications and preparing shortlists. Under the new procedure, reviewing officers from the Office as well as programme managers of the Department jointly reviewed all the applications received for those posts. Upon completion of the joint review, the Office produced shortlists of candidates for interview. This process, which took an average of 53 days from the deadline for the receipt of applications, may have contributed to reducing the time for departmental recommendation of candidates from 152 days in 1999 to 72 days. However, the new procedure did not significantly reduce the overall recruitment time frame, which was still high, at 264 days. For other regular posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, there were no joint reviews. The Office of Human Resources Management took an average of 34 days to prepare shortlists and the Department took an average of 185 days to submit its recommendations to the appointment and promotion bodies for these posts.

9. The overall recruitment time frames discussed above were more than twice the time frame of 120 days envisaged in the Secretary-General's report[1] on human resources management reform. *The Office of Human Resources Management commented that the time frame of 120 days was not applicable to recruitment during 2001, since the new staff selection system envisaged in the Secretary-General's report was implemented only with effect from 1 May 2002.* In the opinion of OIOS, the Office of Human Resources Management needs to take a proactive role in ensuring that vacancies are filled within the 120-day time frame under the new system. The Office's monitoring role requires strengthening to ensure that delays in the candidate evaluation and the departmental review are promptly followed up with the concerned departments. OIOS noted that the new staff selection system, to take effect from 1 May 2002, the "Galaxy system"[6] which was implemented after the completion of the audit, provides the Office of Human Resources Management with the capability of monitoring the recruitment process at each stage. This capability should be effectively used to ensure the timely filling of vacancies.

III. Evaluation of candidates

A. Use of scoring methods for evaluation

10. In order to protect the integrity of the recruitment process and ensure its transparency, OIOS had recommended, in its previous report of 1999 (A/55/397), that the Office of Human Resources Management should develop candidate evaluation criteria in the form of scoring and weighting methods. Such scoring methods would enable the reviewing officer to evaluate the qualifications and experience of each candidate in accordance with the evaluation criteria and to assign appropriate numerical scores. Candidates with the highest scores could be shortlisted for interview. OIOS is of the opinion that such an evaluation system would add significant value to the recruitment process and facilitate the shortlisting of the best available candidates. The Secretary-General's report of 1 August 2000 on human resources management reform[1] envisaged the establishment of such criteria for evaluating candidates' suitability under the new system.

11. The current audit disclosed that such an evaluation system had not been established for recruiting professional staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during 2001. Although the Office of Human Resources Management provided some documentation to suggest that a scoring system had been used for evaluating candidates for certain posts, OIOS considered those evaluations to be of limited value because some of the selected candidates had not been rated at all, while other candidates, who had been highly rated, had not been shortlisted or interviewed. The reasons for these inconsistencies were not documented. The OIOS review concluded that, although an evaluation methodology was envisaged in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform, it had not been used in recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations during 2001. *The Office of Human Resources Management stated that the implementation of the new staff selection system would provide the necessary tools to screen and evaluate candidates on the basis of pre-determined rating criteria.*

B. Deviations from the requirements specified in vacancy announcements

12. Typically, a vacancy announcement issued by the Office of Human Resources Management specifies the duties and responsibilities associated with the post, as well as the competencies and skills expected of candidates in order to be considered for appointment. The competencies and skills in the vacancy announcement specify the educational qualifications required and the minimum number of years of experience that each candidate should possess. These eligibility requirements should serve as the basis for reviewing the applications received in response to the vacancy announcement.

13. In April 2001 (that is, after the issuance of vacancy announcements for posts authorized by the General Assembly on an emergency basis), the Office of Human Resources Management informed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that, "in view of the wide variance in the number of years of experience specified in the individual vacancy announcements, and taking into account the positive experience in the 2000 Economic Commission for Africa recruitment campaign, the minimum number of years of experience will not be used as a criteria for evaluation. The evaluation of applications should be based on the quality and substance of candidates' qualifications and experience rather than on the number of years of experience".

14. OIOS noted that while the vacancy announcements issued by the Office of Human Resources Management during its recruitment campaign for the Economic Commission for Africa in 2000 did not specify the minimum number of years of experience, the vacancy announcements issued for the posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations clearly specified the minimum years of experience as a criterion for eligibility. OIOS is, therefore, of the view that the Office of Human Resources Management's advice to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that the minimum number of years of experience would not be used as a criterion for evaluation created a situation whereby candidates who did not meet the minimum requirement applied for the post and were considered for selection, whereas candidates who may not have applied because they did not meet the minimum requirement were excluded from consideration.

15. OIOS acknowledges that evaluation of applications should be based on the quality and substance rather than the number of years of candidates' experience. However, in order to maintain the integrity of the candidate evaluation process, the eligibility requirements specified in the vacancy announcements, including the minimum number of years of service required for the post, should be used as the criteria for evaluating the candidates. OIOS notes that, effective 1 May 2002, the responsibility for ensuring that candidates were evaluated on the basis of pre-approved evaluation criteria rests with the central review bodies.[6]

IV. Need to refine the requirements specified in vacancy announcements

16. The audit revealed several inconsistencies in the competencies and skills specified in the vacancy announcements for posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including:

(a) The length of service specified in vacancy announcements for different posts at the P-3 level varied from "minimum 4 to 8 years" to "minimum 14 years". Some vacancy announcements did not specify the minimum years of work experience;

(b) Some vacancy announcements for posts at different levels (P-3 and P-4) in the same service specified identical academic qualifications and number of years of experience;

(c) The vacancy announcement for a P-5 post specified that candidates would be eligible even if they did not possess an advanced university degree (provided they had 15 years' professional experience), but the vacancy announcement for a P-4 post in the same service specified that an advanced university degree was required;

(d) The requirements specified in some vacancy announcements were contradictory, stating, for example: "approximately 8 to 12 years professional experience with over 10 years experience in ...";

(e) Vacancy announcements for similar posts at the same level in the same service specified different requirements concerning minimum years of experience.

17. *The Office of Human Resources Management stated that the competencies and skills specified in the vacancy announcements had been drawn from the job descriptions for the respective posts. Wide variations in the job descriptions for similar posts or posts at the same level were reflected in the vacancy announcements for those posts.* The Office's advice to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, asking the latter to disregard the minimum service requirement for evaluating candidates, was a consequence of the wide variance in the number of years of experience specified in the individual vacancy announcements.

18. In the opinion of OIOS, such disparities could lead to inequities in the recruitment process whereby candidates with a significantly greater number of years of experience would be appointed at the same level as other candidates possessing significantly less experience. To prevent such disparities from occurring, the Office of Human Resources Management needs to prepare generic job profiles specifying the broad requirements for appointment to similar posts at the same level. When such generic job profiles become available, vacancy announcements should be prepared in a manner that reflects the broad criteria identified in the generic job profiles, with appropriate changes to include more specific criteria related to the post. OIOS noted that the new staff selection system introduced effective 1 May 2002 envisages the preparation of generic job profiles. The Office of Human Resources Management needs to ensure that inconsistencies in the competencies and skills requirements for posts at the similar level are avoided in future vacancy announcements.

V. Utilization of the roster of selected candidates

19. According to normal recruitment procedures, the Office of Human Resources Management is required to issue a vacancy announcement every time a vacancy arises. With a view to expediting the process of filling the vacancies approved by the General Assembly on an emergency basis, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its report of 3 April 2001,[3] requested the Secretary-General to take measures to streamline and shorten the recruitment time frame. Although the Advisory Committee was informed that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had worked with the Office of Human Resources Management to reduce the recruitment time frame from 260 to 190 days, the Committee felt that the 190-day time frame was still too long, particularly since the posts had been authorized on an emergency basis. On 12 April 2001, the Secretary-General issued a bulletin[7] enabling the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to select several candidates who met the requirements of a post. While the preferred candidate would be appointed to the post, the remaining selected candidates would be placed on a roster to be considered for appointment to similar posts that might arise in the future. Based on the Department's recommendations, the appointment and promotion bodies endorsed several candidates for placement on the roster for possible appointment when similar posts become available at a subsequent date.

20. OIOS reviewed the roster to determine the extent to which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations made use of it when filling new vacancies. Table 2 summarizes the number of candidates placed on the roster and the number that were either appointed or offered an appointment to a post. Of the 113 candidates cleared by the appointment and promotion bodies for appointment to various civilian posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 73 (or approximately 65 per cent) were either appointed or offered an appointment. Likewise, of the 88 candidates identified for military and civilian police posts in the Department, 60 candidates were appointed or offered an appointment.

Table 2
Disposition of candidates on the roster

	Civilian posts	*Military and police posts*
Number of candidates on the roster during 2001	113	88
Number of candidates who were either appointed or offered an appointment (including those who declined)	73	60
Number of candidates remaining on the roster (as at 15 April 2002)	40	28

21. The audit determined that the establishment of the roster was generally useful in that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations did not have to go through the full recruitment cycle for filling new vacancies that were similar to those that had been circulated and filled

previously. OIOS noted a few instances (five posts, in all) when the Department asked the Office of Human Resources Management to issue new vacancy announcements while ignoring candidates who were readily available on the roster. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations stated that the Secretary-General's bulletin of 12 April 2001 did not make it mandatory for programme managers to select candidates from the roster when new vacancies occurred. Sometimes, programme managers may decide to ask for the issuance of a new vacancy announcement with a view to improving the geographical distribution and/or gender balance in an organizational unit within the Department.* OIOS determined that although 68 candidates remained on the roster, posts similar to the ones for which they were selected had not become available and may not become available during the one-year period of the roster's validity.

VI. Geographical distribution and gender balance

A. Equitable geographical distribution

22. Legislative mandates governing the recruitment of professional staff for posts in the Secretariat require the Secretary-General to ensure that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity serve as the paramount consideration for employment, with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. Although a vast majority of posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are not governed by the system of desirable ranges set out in General Assembly resolution 42/220 A of 21 December 1987, and reaffirmed by the Assembly in its resolutions 51/226 of 3 April 1997 and 53/221 of 7 April 1999, established recruitment procedures nonetheless require that due regard be paid to recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

23. General Assembly resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001 reaffirms that the Secretary-General may consider external candidates for posts at the P-4 level, with due regard to geographical distribution, while giving fullest regard in filling those posts to candidates with the requisite qualifications and experience already in the service of the United Nations. Furthermore, in the same resolution, the Assembly agreed with the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations that troop-contributing countries should be properly represented in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, reflecting their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping activities. When recruiting professional staff members for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, therefore, the Department is required to give due regard to the adequate representation of: (a) unrepresented and underrepresented countries; and (b) troop-contributing countries. In conjunction with these requirements, the Department must pay due regard to the special measures for achieving gender equality, as well as the recruitment of candidates who are already in the service of the United Nations.

24. Since most of the posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are not subject to the desirable range system, no clear numerical targets exist for ensuring that the Department achieves equitable geographical distribution on the basis of mandated standards. The establishment of such mandated standards for equitable geographical distribution is further complicated by the fact that some of the major troop-contributing and/or police-contributing countries are overrepresented in the Secretariat with regard to posts covered by the system of desirable ranges.

25. The analysis conducted by OIOS of the nationalities of candidates selected for appointment to the 67 professional posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that were filled pursuant to the approval of 93 posts on an emergency basis revealed the following:

(a) Of the 67 selected candidates, 59 (or approximately 88 per cent) were from troop-contributing and/or police-contributing countries. Although the remaining eight candidates were not from troop- or police-contributing countries, their countries were not overrepresented in the Secretariat in posts to which the system of desirable ranges applied;

(b) Of the 59 candidates from troop- and police-contributing countries, 43 were from countries that were among the top 20 troop and police contributors;

(c) Sixteen selected candidates were from countries that were overrepresented in the Secretariat under the desirable range system. However, all of those countries are troop contributors. Six candidates were

from underrepresented countries, of which five candidates' countries are troop contributors.

26. In broad terms, it appeared that the geographical distribution of candidates selected by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for appointment to posts approved by the General Assembly on an emergency basis was well dispersed. However, in view of the special importance attached to equitable geographical distribution by the Organization's legislative bodies, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to review the geographical distribution of its professional staff and take appropriate steps to further improve the situation while recruiting professional staff for the additional posts approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/241 of 1 February 2002. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations commented that, in respect of these additional posts for which recruitment is currently under way, due regard would once again be given to the need for achieving equitable geographical distribution.*

B. Gender balance

27. With regard to gender balance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided statistics indicating that 21 out of the 67 (or almost 31 per cent) professional staff selected for appointment to the posts approved by the General Assembly on an emergency basis were women. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations explained that this achievement resulted from the special efforts made by programme managers to shortlist as many women candidates as possible from the pool of applications received. In the opinion of OIOS, in order to further improve the gender balance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to formulate a targeted approach, if necessary in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Such an approach should set broad targets and take additional measures, such as specifically requesting Member States to increase the number of women candidates recommended for consideration in making appointments to military and civilian police posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations clarified that it had taken measures for improving gender balance. Notes verbale under which military and civilian police posts are circulated currently include a request for Member States to recommend women candidates. The Department will seek to identify additional means for increasing the representation of women.*

VII. Recommendations

28. OIOS made the following recommendations to improve the practices and procedures for recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Although the audit scope was limited to reviewing the recruitment of professional staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, OIOS suggested that the Office of Human Resources Management consider implementing recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 below, while recruiting staff for all Departments of the Secretariat. Comments received from the Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the implementation status of the recommendations are summarized after each recommendation.

Recommendation 1

29. The Office of Human Resources Management should effectively monitor the recruitment process for each vacancy to ensure that the recruitment time frames envisaged in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform are achieved (AP2002/55/2/1).*

30. *The Office of Human Resources Management accepted this recommendation and commented that the "Galaxy system" would facilitate the monitoring of the recruitment process.*

Recommendation 2

31. The Office of Human Resources Management should ensure that the criteria for evaluating candidates are established prior to issuance of each vacancy announcement. To increase the objectivity of the candidate evaluation process, the Office should encourage programme managers to make use of numeric ratings established prior to issuance of each vacancy announcement, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform (AP2002/55/2/2).

* The symbols in parentheses in this section refer to an internal code used by OIOS for recording recommendations.

32. *The Office of Human Resources Management accepted the recommendation and stated that it would ensure that no applications are transmitted to programme managers for evaluation until the relevant criteria had been approved by the central review bodies. The "Galaxy system", introduced with effect from 1 May 2002, provides programme managers with the necessary tools for evaluating candidates in accordance with pre-approved evaluation criteria. The numeric ratings serve as an optional sorting mechanism for those vacancies that may attract a large number of applications.*

Recommendation 3

33. In order to eliminate inconsistencies and disparities in the eligibility requirements for posts at the same level, the Office of Human Resources Management should prepare generic job profiles and ensure that vacancy announcements are consistent with such generic job profiles (AP2002/55/2/3).

34. *The Office of Human Resources Management accepted this recommendation and noted that more than 30 sets of generic job profiles had already been approved for professional posts in the Secretariat and in special missions. The Office will ensure consistency between generic job profiles and vacancy announcements.*

Recommendation 4

35. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should review the current composition of its staff in terms of geographical distribution and take appropriate steps with a view to further improving the situation during the next phase of recruitment for the additional posts approved by the General Assembly in February 2002 (AP2002/55/2/4).

36. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted this recommendation.*

Recommendation 5

37. To improve the gender balance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should set broad targets and take additional measures, including specific requests to Member States, to increase the number of women officers recommended for consideration in making appointments to military and civilian posts in the Secretariat (AP2002/55/2/5).

38. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted this recommendation and noted that it is committed to improving the gender balance within the Department.

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Notes

[1] A/55/253.

[2] A/55/305-S/2000/809.

[3] A/55/882.

[4] The average number of days for 1999 relates to Professional posts in the Secretariat as a whole (see A/55/397). For 2001, the average relates only to Professional posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

[5] ST/AI/1999/8, sect. 3.6.

[6] See ST/AI/2002/4.

[7] ST/SGB/2001/4.